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Shiva Ahmadi Lotus, 2014 Digital video, color, sound, 8:44 min. Asia Society, New York. Gift of Anne and Joel Ehrenkrantz, 2015.1

## An Iranian Artist's Politically Charged Paintings Inspired by Persian Miniatures

Art | By Alison Nastasi | January 12, 2016

*Global/Local 1960–2015: Six Artists from Iran*, opening today at New York University's Grey Art Gallery, draws upon an impressive collection of more than 200 Iranian artworks founder Abby Weed Grey began to amass more than 50 years ago. The show includes 90 works, from painting to mixed-media installation, and is the first major museum exhibition in the US to include pioneering Iranian modernists and emerging artists working in Tehran and abroad.

A press release details why *Global/Local* is so essential: "Interest in modern and contemporary art from the Middle East and Iran has grown exponentially over the past few decades. This has been especially true in recent years, when turmoil in the region and the tense political relationship between Iran and the US have dominated the news. Yet sanctions have made it extremely difficult to see modern Iranian art outside that country."

Featured in *Global/Local* is [Shiva Ahmadi](#), whose paintings are informed by these events. “In my work I am always exploring what is going on in our world. There is always a battle between the good and the bad, there is always . . . a struggle,” Ahmadi told Grey Art Gallery. Inspired by the Persian miniature paintings she saw growing up in Iran — which she initially found “[kitschy](#),” preferring the works of American painters like Jackson Pollock — Ahmadi’s “fantasyscapes of mythical creatures and enthroned figures are characterized by ornate patterns, rich textures, and vivid hues. Yet beneath this captivating world lies corruption and violence, a place where faceless abstract leaders inhabit war-ridden territories while minions, in the guise of monkeys and buffoons, juggle weapons.”

Click through our gallery to see more of Ahmadi’s work. [Global/Local 1960–2015: Six Artists from Iran](#) is on view through April 2.

















